

3695, Brownstown Cnt Com Sch corp

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Our proposed project targets student learning with a focus on improving writing and inquiry skills by implementing the following strategies: expanded technology-enhanced instruction supported by strong teacher preparation, increased student engagement and production, and improved access to technology for both teachers and students in order to achieve a high level of student learning. In alignment with our technology plan and Academic Standards, Brownstown School Corporation (BCCSC) will use this 2009 grant funds to place technology immediately into the hands of teachers and students in grades 5-8. Our goal is to engage students by implementing a vertically and horizontally integrated plan that will enhance and expand teaching and learning with emphasis on writing and inquiry learning at the 5-8 level by introducing new technologies and strengthening the use of current technology. All 5-8 teachers will have access to experienced technology integration specialists who are well-prepared to demonstrate, model, and support the use of the new technology in the classroom setting.

Classrooms in grades 5-8 will be transformed into 21st Century Classrooms with daily access to hardware such as LCD projectors, document cameras, laptops, student response systems, wireless interactive pads, interactive white boards, and video digital cameras. To provide frequent access to computers, two mobile netbook labs will be purchased. One will be shared by four 5th grade classrooms. Another will be shared by the 7th and 8th grade language arts teachers. Four fully-equipped multimedia student production stations for will be added.

After structured, rigorous professional development, subject area teachers will develop activities that offer students expanded and varied opportunities to write and publish their work electronically. Due to extremely limited computer access, the netbook labs will immensely increase students' opportunities to research and to compose. Besides typical essays and open-ended responses, writing activities will include online collaborative student forums, email communication, photo essays, and other forms of written communications as well as other creative productions.

A valuable partnership with West Washington School Corporation will offer our teachers in grades 5-8 guidance and support in strengthening their curriculum by incorporating content, technology-based resources such as virtual field trips, virtual labs, and Internet inquiry activities currently accessible online. Since West Washington has already implemented a curricular plan promoting regular use of these types of activities, they will serve as mentors to our 5-8 classroom teachers. Also, in a unique collaboration, our partnership will provide additional outlets for safe online communication and virtual classes as teachers and students from both school systems interact in authentic, real world settings in order to increase student engagement and achievement. This partnership is further strengthened by collaboration between Project Lead the Way instructors as they undergo training and design a first-year implementation of the Project curriculum that supports our goals.

With the use of Learning Technologies Grant Funds, all BCCSC teachers 5-8 will attend high-quality professional development offerings enabling them to implement technology effectively, efficiently and creatively. Through our partnership with West Washington, this extensive and varied professional development will include opportunities for teachers to learn how to use new and existing technology, including both hardware and software, in innovative ways that emphasize writing and student engagement in the daily classroom. Additional sessions modeling research-based best practices and teaching strategies will introduce technology tools such as Moodle and Thinkfinity to identify and build lessons, resources, and interactive activities.